



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,  
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## ***CAREX VAGINATA*** **SHEATHED SEDGE**

Sheathed Sedge is a grass-like perennial with long, slender, scaly rhizomes and with short, broad, flat, grass-like leaves clustered along the bases of the stems. The flowering stems are much taller than the leaves, standing up to 40 cm, and bear 2-4 well-separated erect stalked spikes, the lowest subtended by a leaf-like bract with a somewhat inflated sheath. The terminal spike is club shaped and has only male flowers, and the lateral spikes are cylindrical, 1-2 cm long, and have only female flowers. The greenish to brownish perigynia are 3.5-4.5 mm long with short 2 toothed beaks, subtended by shorter light brown scales with broad green mid-veins. Each perigynium has 3 stigmas protruding from the opening at the top, and an achene that is 3-sided. Fruit mature in July.

Diagnostic characters of *CAREX VAGINATA* include the rhizomatous habit, well-developed basal stem leaves, bracts with inflated sheaths, female flowers with 3 stigmas, and perigynia without hairs and with definite short beaks. A hand lens or microscope and technical key are needed for positive identification.